DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 101 186 95 CE 002 955

TITLE The Report of a New England Conference on Environmental Education in Adult Basic Education, June 16-18, 1971.

SPONS AGENCY New England Center for Continuing Education, Durham, N.H.; Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D. C. Div. of Adult Basic Education.

PUB DATE 71

NOTE 21p.; Conference held at Durham, New Hampshire (June 16-18, 1971)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE

DESCRIPTORS *Adult Basic Education; *Conference Reports; Curriculum Development; *Educational Needs; *Environmental Education; Interinstitutional Cooperation; Program Planning; Regional Cooperation; *Regional Planning

ABSTRACT

The report describes the process and content of a cooperative regional approach aimed at introducing environmental education into the Adult Basic Education (ABE) curriculum. Tracing the purposes, planning, development, and design of the conference, the document offers need statements developed to serve as a general guide from which to plan positive action programs at the regional, State, and local levels. Teacher education needs, community needs, participant needs and ABE program needs are listed, concluding that: (1) Followup action should be implemented through the establishment of a task force; (2) That local conditions be considered and local in-service teaching institutes planned; (3) ABE environmental education curriculum materials should be developed and distributed; and (4) Federal support should be continued. A list of conference participants and the conference agenda are appended. (MW)

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"ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION"

The report of a New England Conference June 16-18, 1971

Project Director: Peter Horne

Sponsored by:
University of Maine / New England Center
U.S. Office of Education
Division of Adult Basic Education
in cooperation with the
New England Center for Continuing Education

OE00295S

THE REPORT OF A NEW ENGLAND CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION HELD JUNE 16-18, 1971

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report is to share with the reader the process and content of a cooperative regional approach to an adult basic education problem relating to the introduction of environmental education into the adult basic education curriculum.

The needs, statements, and recommendations growing out of this effort (and found within the pages of this report) were developed after several months of information-gathering and two days of intensive discussion among thirty-nine participants, including adult basic education teachers, administrators, state directors, environmental resource persons, and university educators from both urban and rural areas of New England. Their purpose is to provide a guide from which to develop environmental education action plans at the regional, state, and local levels in adult basic education programs.

BACKGROUND

During 1970, national focus was brought to the nation's environmental education needs through the U. S. Senate hearings and the subsequent proposed Environmental Quality Education Act. The widely-circulated report recommending passage of this act stimulated educators at many levels to take a self-critical view of their present effectiveness in helping citizens of all ages, social and economic levels to deal effectively with their environment as it relates to the quality of living.

At this time a group of concerned adult basic educators in New England met with Mr. Bayard Clark, Special Assistant to the Director of the Division of Adult Education Programs, U. S. Office of Education (U.S.O.E.), and with Mr. Carroll Towey, Adult Education Program Officer, U.S.O.E., Boston, Massachusetts, to discuss the relationship of environmental education to adult basic education and the possibilities of developing curricular materials that would be useful for introducing environmental education into adult basic education programs. During the course of these discussions, some important questions were raised:

How does one define environmental education as it relates to adult basic education?

What are adult basic educators presently doing to help participants become more informed, active citizens on environmental issues?

Can environmental issues effectively be used as a vehicle for learning by adult students seeking basic skills?

What needs are prevalent among AB educators relative to introduction of environmental education into the adult basic education curriculum?

Are there possible ways to share resources across New England to introduce environmental education into ABE programs?

What are the first steps?

PURPOSE OF THE CONFERENCE

As a result of these initial meetings, a New England Regional Planning Task Force was formed to plan a regional conference to begin addressing the questions raised above and to more fully explore the needs of ABE participants, ABE teachers, the community, and the ABE program as it relates to environmental education. Further, it was planned that a regional conference would provide an opportunity to share current environmental education philosophies, innovative approaches, and instructional media materials that could be used to introduce environmental education into ABE.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONFERENCE

The planning and development effort for this conference served as a focal point for the collaboration of organizations, institutions, and personnel with a broad spectrum of knowledge and experience. The Regional Planning Task Force consisted of the following members:

Mary Bodanza, Project Director, Adult Basic/Civic Education, Massachusetts Department of Education, Boston

Bayard S. Clark, Special Assistant to the Director, Division of Adult Education Programs, U.S.O.E., Washington, D.C.

F. Philip Dufour, Director of Special Program Division, University of Maine, Orono

Robert Forste, New England Center for Continuing Education, Durham, New Hampshire

Ralph Goodno, Regional Resource Development Specialist, Cooperative Extension, Essex Agricultural and Technical Institute, Hawthorne, Massachusetts

Peter J. Horne, Consultant, Adult Education, Rye, New Hampshire

Charles E. Roth, Director of Education, Massachusetts Audubon Society, Littleton, Massachusetts

Robert Sinocrope, Administrative Assistant, Massachusetts State Department, Boston

Carroll Towey, Adult Education Program Officer, U.S.O.E., Boston

INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

The University of Maine/New England Center for Continuing Education activity under the direction of Mr. F. Philip Dufour, through a grant by the W. K. Kellogg Foundation, provided the financial resources to plan and implement this regional conference. Mr. Peter J. Horne, Adult Education Consultant, was contracted by this office to organize and coordinate this effort and to report its outcome.

The U. S. Office of Education, Division of Adult Education Programs, through Mr. Bayard Clark, provided full cooperation and technical assistance for the designing, planning, and development of this effort.

The Adult Education Program Officer for Region 1, U.S.O.E., Boston, Mr. Carroll Towey, provided the services of his office for coordination of the regional task force efforts and contributed to the conceptual direction of the program.

The Massachusetts Department of Education, through Miss Mary Bodanza, Project Director of Adult Basic Education, and Robert Sinocrope, Administrative Assistant, Massachusetts State Department, provided conference coordination and environmental education literature and video tapes.

The National Multi-media Center for ABE, Washington, D. C., under the direction of Mrs. Wanda Koskinen, conducted research for existing ABE environmental education materials and other environmental materials adaptable to ABE. These source materials were shared during the conference.

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The New England State Directors of Adult Basic Education gave their full support for the conference and selected participants to attend, who would be carrying out follow-up activities in their respective states.

The New England Center for Continuing Education provided the services of Robert Forste, Staff Associate, Environmental Studies, to assist in planning the conference.

CONFERENCE DESIGN

To accomplish the purposes of the conference, thirty-nine participants (Appendix A) from six states were selected on the basis of their knowledge and experience in the areas of ecology, environmental education, media, adult basic educatior, and the community. An additional criteria for selection was their commitment to follow-up action during the next school year. Prior to the conference, each participant received four pre-conference questions to stimulate their thinking and to begin establishing a common frame of reference among them, (Appendix B). The conference itself was designed as a working conference, which would facilitate the identification of needs and full interaction of ideas in a systematic manner. During the two and half days of the conference, four heterogeneous task groups, consisting of representatives from each state with a cross-section of skills and interests, were formed to identify needs in four separate problem areas relating to environmental education in adult basic education. Each group was led by a skilled discussion and group process leader. The four problem areas assigned to the task groups were:

Adult Basic Education Teacher Needs
Community Needs
Basic Education Participant Needs
Adult Basic Education Program Needs

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In addition to the extensive use of task groups, the participants were given an opportunity to hear presentations of current concepts and organizational approaches to environmental education by leaders from throughout New England, (Appendix C). Further, during the evenings, the participants shared curriculum materials, films, slides, tapes, and bibliographies collected prior to the conference and discussed their implications for adult basic education programs.

NEED STATEMENTS

Given the two days of discussion, the sharing of ideas and needs for environmental education in adult basic education, the following problem/need statements were reported by the four task groups. The task groups were asked to state these problems and needs in negative terms to avoid solution-oriented statements that cloud the identification of the problem.

It should be emphasized that these statements were developed to serve as a general guide from which to plan positive action programs at the regional, state, and local levels.

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ABE Teacher Education Needs

1. There are no programs to train ABE teachers in the process of incorporating environmental studies in the curriculum.

2. There is little teacher understanding of the process of learning.

3. There is little teacher understanding of the methods of diagnosing student needs and translating adult needs into student-learning activities.

4. There is little teacher understanding of specific learning strategies to meet the identified student needs.

5. There is little opportunity for ABE teachers to observe or experience different teaching styles.

6. There are no good models of criteria for the selection and preparation of ABE teachers.

7. There are no criteria for the selection of teacher trainers of ABE teachers.

8. There is little time for ABE teachers to have growth experiences, to develop curriculum plans and to produce instructional materials.

9. Teachers lack skills in the operation, utilization and production of audio-visual instructional materials -- current and future.

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Community Needs

1. Basic Problem: Community suffers from inability to cope with its surroundings.

2. Basic Cause: Lack of information and education.

   1. People improperly equipped to judge results of their actions on environment.
   2. People do not realize the seriousness of the problem.
   3. People are ignorant of alternatives.
   4. People lack knowledge of ways in which pressure can be applied.

3. Attitudinal Results:

   1. No concern for environment.
   2. No consideration of alternatives.
   3. No community spirit by people and institutions.
   4. Lack of sensitivity to nature.
   5. Lack of discrimination in accepting change as progress.

4. Behavioral Results: Lack of informed individual actions as consumer.

   1. Improper selection of products -- nonbio-degradable, disposable.
   2. Over consumption of all products.
   3. Lack of attempts to re-cycle.

   Lack of individual concern for actions of government and industry -- no personal involvement to change things.

   Lack of action in industry and government.

   1. No long-range plans.
   2. Government does not survey community conditions.
   3. Lack of government responsibility to provide solutions.
   4. Lack of enforcement of existing legislation and creation of new legislation.

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Participants Needs

1. Perceptions

Awareness of:
- Community services
- Community facilities
- Home pride
- Neighborhood pride

Perceive and seek individual involvement in homes, neighborhood and community problem solving.

Perceive need for environmental input in studies.

2. Knowledge

Identification of individual ecological problems:
community -------- state -------- national -------- international

Birth control, population issues

Environmental programs

Health and legal opportunities and problems -- rights, responsibilities

Pesticides involvement in individual and community health

3. Actions

Life style actions by which participant can work to improve environment

Economic effects of ecological actions in participant

Problem-solving skills applied to environmental issues one by one

Individual's role in change -- political action, etc.

NEED: For a process approach to environmental awareness, concern, and action within adult basic education programs which will bring to participants problem-solving skills that create tools for coping with the individual's perceived problems. Participants to gain information about the basics of environmental issues, both ecological and economic, along with understandings of the health, legal, and ethical rights and responsibilities, to the cultural and physical environment that sustains them. To use involvement in personal and local issues to develop the basic skills of reading, writing and computation that are basic to traditional notions of literacy.

GOAL: Strive toward an increase in environmental literacy in each of our participants.

OBJECTIVE: The development of life styles that are humanly successful and ecologically sound.

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ABE Program Needs

1. Environmental concerns are not now a priority in ABE programs.

2. There are a limited number of materials appropriate for the incorporation of environmental concerns in ABE programs.

3. ABE programs are not always relevant to the needs of the individual and/or the community.

4. ABE programs do not reach a majority of their potential clientele.

5. ABE programs do not fully utilize available community resources.

6. ABE programs have not been able to recruit properly-trained environmental education teachers.

7. ABE programs do not have a strong national, state, or local commitment.

8. ABE staff do not have the skills required for the incorporation of environmental education into the ABE curriculum.

9. ABE programs cannot employ a long-term sequential environmental curriculum.

10. ABE programs in their emphasis on basic skills often lose sight of the stated national program goal.

11. ABE programs lack techniques for evaluating environmental attitudes and behavior.

The following need statements were derived from the four preceeding categories and were considered to be the most prevalent in ABE programs throughout the New England Region, by the participants:

Priority Needs

1. There are no programs to train ABE teachers in the process of incorporating environmental studies into the curriculum.

2. There is little time for ABE teachers to have growth experiences to develop curriculum plans and produce instructional materials.

3. Environmental concerns are not now a priority in ABE programs.

4. There are a limited number of materials appropriate for the incorporation of environmental concerns in ABE programs.

5. ABE programs do not fully utilize available community resources.

6. There is a lack of awareness of community services, facilities, home and neighborhood pride by participants.

7. Participants need problem-solving skills applied to environmental issues one by one.

8. There is a lack of information and education within the community.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

During the final general session, recommendations were made from the floor for follow-up action to be taken at the regional, state, and local levels throughout New England. The recommendations were as follows:

1. That task forces of teachers and adult basic education participants at state and local levels be formed to translate these needs to action.

2. That the general needs statements should be re-defined in terms of unique local conditions and that in-service training institutes should be planned locally in response to the needs, with assistance of resource persons made available by the state and region.

3. That as curricula and instructional materials are developed for environmental education in ABE, that they be distributed and shared across the region.

4. That the U.S.O.E., Adult Basic Education, continue to provide support for the development of collaborative approaches and planning responsive to local needs relative to environmental education in adult basic education.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

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Conference on ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION
June 16 - 18, 1971
LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

BAPTISTE, Don
ABE Supervisor
OIC
184 Dudley St.
Roxbury, Mass. 02219

BARDWELL, John
Chairman
Media Dept.
UNH
Durham, N.H. 03824

BENNETT, Austin
Community Development
Specialist
UMAINE
307 Winslow Hall
Orono, Me. 04473

BODANZA, Mary
Project Director
Adult Basic/Civic Ed.
Mass. Dept. of Ed.
182 Tremont St.
Boston, Mass. 02111

BUDHAI, Dinan
Counselor
Community Learning
Center, Inc.
238 Columbia St.
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

BUTZOW, John
Assistant Professor
of Ed.
College of Ed.
UMAINE
Orono, Me. 04473

CHALTAS, John
Assoc. Professor of Ed.
UNH
Durham, N.H. 03824

CLARK, Bayard
Special Assist. to
the Director
Div. of Adult Ed. Programs
U.S. Office of Ed.
Seventh and D St., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20202

CONNOLLY, Michael
Editor-in-chief
MIT Press
50 Ames St.
Cambridge, Mass.

CRAFT, Donald
Assoc. Principal
for Continuing Ed.
Burlington High Sch.
Burlington, Vt. 05401

DOWLING, Gail
Director
Barre Learning Center
18 N. Main St.
Barre, Vt. 05641

EWERT, William
Consultant
State Dept. of Ed.
State House Annex
Concord, N.H.

FORSTE, Robert
Staff Associate
NECCE Admin. Bldg.
Durham, N.H. 03824

GALLETTI, Marie
Curriculum Specialist
Adult Learning Center
Worcester Public Schools
Worcester, Mass. 01609

GOODNO, Ralph
Regional Resource
Development Specialist
Cooperative Extension
Essex Agric. & Tech. Inst.
Hawthorne, Mass. 01937

HORNE, Peter
Conference Director
NECCE Admin. Bldg.
Durham, N.H. 03824

KOSKINEN, Wanda
Director
National Multimedia
Center for ABE
1424 K. St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20005

LOWE, George
State Coordinator for ABE
Dept. of Ed.
Montpelier, Vt. 05602

McGINNIS, Leonard
Director of Adult Ed.
Waterville High School
Waterville, Me. 04901

McGRAIN, Gerald
Director of Extension Programs
Worcester Public Schools
Worcester, Mass. 01609

MATHESON, Lois
Assoc. Basic Continuing Ed.
N.Y. State Dept. of Ed.
Albany, N.Y. 12284

MEADOWS, Matthew
Adult Basic Ed. Teacher
Springfield Adult
Learning Center
550 State St.
Springfield, Mass.

NEUMANN, Peter
Senior Vice President
Addison-Wesley Publishing
Company, Inc.
Reading, Mass. 01867

NASBERG, Arthur
Director, Adult Ed.
Bangor School Dept.
Bangor, Me. 04401

NEWSOM, William
Consultant, ABE
R.I. Dept. of Ed.
Roger Williams Bldg.
Hayes St.
Providence, R.I. 02908

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O'BRIEN, David
Counselor ABE
97 Alpine St.
Somerville, Mass.

PECKER, Scott
Curriculum Writer
Community Learning
Center, Inc.
238 Columbia St.
Cambridge, Mass. 02139

PELKEY, Harry
Area Supervisor
ABE Learning Center
158 Bank St.
Burlington, Vt. 05401

PHIPPS, Helen
Director
ABE Program
42 Bellamy Rd.
Dover, N.H. 03820

ROTH, Charles
Director of Ed.
Mass. Audubon Society
South Great Rd.
LIttleton, Mass. 01773

RYDER, Marge
MAT - Candidate
Sch. for International
Training
box 676
Brattleboro, Vt. 05301

SAUCIER, Dana
Director of Adult Ed.
Community High School
Fort Kent, Me. 04743

SEYMOUR, John
Director of Adult Ed.
Lewiston Memorial Armory
Lewiston, Me. 04240

SIDERIS, John
Counsultant for ABE
N.H. Dept. of Ed.
64 N. Main St.
Concord, N.H. 03301

ROY, Dorothy
Adult Ed. Learning
Center
63 Main St.
Newport, Vt. 05355

SINICROPE, Bob
Admin. Assistant
Mass. State Dept.
182 Tremont St.
Boston, Mass. 02111

TAYLOR, Dorothy
Director of Training
OIC
184 Dudley St.
Roxbury, Mass. 02119

TOWEY, Carroll
Adult Ed. Program
Officer
Room 1309
JFK Building
Boston, Mass. 02203

WILLINK, Wesley
Coordinator
Environmental Ed.
Center
Yarmouth Intermediate
School
Yarmouth, Me.

Appendix B

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A PRECONFERENCE THOUGHT JOGGER

To begin establishing a common frame of reference among the participants in this conference and to facilitate the sharing of information when you arrive, we ask that you consider the following questions:

1. What are the goals for Adult Basic Education?

2. What relationship do I see between environmental education and adult basic education?

3. What ongoing approaches and learning activities do I know of in ecology or environmental education that have implications for adult basic education?

4. What resources are needed to begin to introduce environmental education into the adult basic education curriculum?

There are no pat answers to these questions and the vitality of the conference will be in the exchange of many views. These questions are meant to help bring focus to some common concerns and to act as a springboard for discussion during the conference.

Please be sure to bring any instructive materials, curriculum guides, and bibliographies that you would like to share with others. We will have a Media Materials Market Place for display of these materials.

Appendix C

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NEW ENGLAND REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

June 16 - 18, 1971

-PROGRAM-

sponsored by

University of Maine at The New England Center
Durham, New Hampshire
and U.S. Office of Education

in cooperation with

The New England Center

JUNE 16 WEDNESDAY

1:30 p.m.	Registration	GALLERY
2:30 p.m.	Welcoming Remarks: Dr. Arthur S. Adams Senior Consultant New England Center Mr. F. Philip Dufour Coordinator UMAINE/NEC The Conference Plan: Mr. Peter J. Horne Conference Director Keynote Address: "A Perspective on Environmental Education" Dr. George Lowe Director Environmental Studies Unit U.S. Office of Education	WINDSOR - CHARLES ROOM
3:45 p.m.	Discussion Groups: "What are the issues in ecology - How do they relate to adult basic education?"	MANSFIELD, KEARSAGE AND WINDSOR - CHARLES ROOMS
5:30 p.m.	Social Hour and Cash Bar	GALLERY
6:45 p.m.	Dinner	CONCORD ROOM
8:00 p.m.	Media Market Place Films, slides, materials, discussion	GALLERY, MANSFIELD, KEARSAGE AND WINDSOR - CHARLES ROOMS

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JUNE 17 THURSDAY

8:00 a.m.	English Hunt Breakfast	CONCORD ROOM
9:00 a.m.	Needs Identification Issues Approaches Skills Resources Mr. John D. Bardwell Chairman, Media Department University of New Hampshire	WINDSOR - CHARLES ROOM
9:15 a.m.	Formation of Task Groups for discussion with Group Leaders	ADMINISTRATIVE MEETING ROOM, ADAMS RESIDENTIAL TOWER LOBBY AND WINDSOR - CHARLES ROOM
10:30 a.m.	Coffee Break	
10:45 a.m.	Continue Discussion	
12 noon	Lunch	CONCORD ROOM
1:30 p.m.	Task Group Reports - Plenary Session	WINDSOR - CHARLES ROOM
2:15 p.m.	Sharing of learning models and approaches- discussion of their implications for adult basic education Roxbury Project Mr. Bob Sinicrope Administrative Assistant Mass. State Dept. of Education Mr. Ralph Goodno Regional Resource Development Specialist Essex Agriculture and Technical Institute	WINDSOR - CHARLES ROOM
3:15 p.m.	Cold Beverages	
3:30 p.m.	Continue Discussion Maine Regional Environmental Education Program Mr. Wesley Willink Coordinator Environmental Education Center Yarmouth, Maine	WINDSOR - CHARLES ROOM
4:30 p.m.	Break	
5:30 p.m.	Clambake in a marine environment Song, salt, sea, and seafood Informal Discussion	Location to be announced

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JUNE 18 FRIDAY

8:00 a.m.	English Hunt Breakfast	CONCORD ROOM
9:00 a.m.	General Session Introducing environmental education into adult basic education - What are the next steps in terms of: The Issues The Identified Needs The Resources What can we do individually? How can we collaborate?	WINDSOR - CHARLES ROOM
9:30 a.m.	Formation of Task Groups	ADAMS RESIDENTIAL TOWER LOBBY, KEARSAGE AND WINDSOR - CHARLES ROOMS
10:15 a.m.	Coffee Break	
10:30 a.m.	Continue Discussion	
11:00 a.m.	Reports, recommendations, summary	WINDSOR - CHARLES ROOM
11:30 a.m.	Adjournment	